SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Pioneer in the California redwood region, John Cardigan, at forty-seven, is the leading citizen of Sequoia, owner of milis, ships, and many acres of timber, a widower after three years of married life, and father of two-day-old Bryce Cardigan.

CHAPTER II.—At fourteen Bryce makes the acquaintance of Shirley Sumner, a vis-tior to Sequola, and his junior by a few years. Together they visit the Valley of the Glants, sacred to John Cardigan and his son as the burial place of Bryce's mother, and part with mutual regret.

CHAPTER III.—While Bryce is at col-lege John Cardigan meets with heavy business losses and for the first time views the future with uncertainty.

CHAPTER IV.—After graduation from college, and a trip abroad, Bryce Cardigan comes home. On the train he meets shirley Sumner, on her way to Sequola to make her home there with her uncle, Col. Pennington. Bryce learns that his father's eyesight has failed and that Col. Pennington is seeking to take advantage of the old man's business misfortunes.

CHAPTER V.—In the Valley of the Giants young Cardigan finds a tree felled directly across his mother's grave. Indications are that it was cut down to secure the burl, and evidence seems to show that Pennington and his woods-boss, Jules Rondeau, are implicated in the outrage.

"I dare say it's quite all right to have invited him, isn't it, Uncle Seth?" "Certainly, certainly, my dear, Quite all right, but, er-ah, slightly

inconvenient. I am expecting other company Thursday night-unfortunately, Brayton, the president of the Bank of Sequola, is coming up to dine and discuss some business affairs with me afterward; so if you don't mind, my dear, suppose you call young Cardigan up and ask him to defer his visit until some later date."

"Certainly, uncle. What perfectly marvelous roses! How did you succeed in growing them, Uncle Seth?" He smiled sourly. "I didn't raise

them," he replied. "That half-breed Indian that drives John Cardigan's car brought them around about an hour ago, along with a card. There It is, beside your plate."

suppose Bryce Cardigan is vindicating himself," she murmured as she withdrew the card from the envelope. As she had surmised, it was Bryce Cardigan's, Colonel Pennington was the proprietor of a similar surmise.

"Fast work, Shirley," he murmured banteringly. "I wonder what he'll send you for luncheon. Some dill pickles, probably."

She pretended to be very busy with the roses, and not to have heard

Shirley, left alone at the breakfasttable, picked idly at the preserved figs the owlish butler set before her. Vaguely she wondered at her uncle's apparent hostility to the Cardigans; she was as vaguely troubled in the knowledge that until she should succeed in eradicating this hostility, it must inevitably act as a bar to the further progress of her friendship with Bryce Cardigan. And she told herself she did not want to lose that friendship. She wasn't the least bit in love with him albeit she realized he was rather lovable. And lastly he was a good, devoted son and was susceptible of development into a congenial and wholly acceptable comrade to a young lady absolutely lacking in other means

of amusement. She finished her breakfast in thoughtful silence; then she went to the telephone and called up Bryce. He recognized her voice instantly and called her name before she had opportunity to announce her identity.

"Thank you so much for the beautiful roses, Mr. Cardigan," she began. "I'm glad you liked them. Nobody picks flowers out of our garden, you know. I used to, but I'll be too busy hereafter to bother with the garden. By the way, Miss Sumner, does your

"I believe he does-a little old rattletrap which he drives himself."

uncle own a car?"

"Then I'll send George over with the Napler this afternoon. You might care to take a spin out into the surrounding country. By the way, Miss Sumner, you are to consider George and that car as your personal property. I fear you're going to find Sequola a dull place; so whenever you wish to go for a ride, just call me up. and I'll have George report to you." "But think of all the expensive gaso-

line and tires!" What are you going to do this afternoon?"

"I don't know. I haven't thought that far ahead."

"For some real sport I would suggest that you motor up to Laguna Grande. That's Spanish for Big Lagoon, you know. Take a rod with you. There are some land-locked salmon in the lagoon.

"But I haven't any rod." "I'll send you over a good one." "But I have nobody to teach me

how to use it," she hinted daringly. "I appreciate that compliment," he flashed back at her, "but unfortunately my holidays are over for a long. long time. I took my father's place in the business this morning."

"So soon?" "Yes. Things have been happening while I was away. However, speaking of fishing, George Sea Otter will prove an invaluable instructor. He is a good boy and you may trust him implicitly. On Thursday evening you can tell what success you had with the salmon."

"Oh, that reminds me, Mr. Cardigan. You can't come Thursday evening, after all." And she explained the reason. "Suppose you come Wednesday night instead."

"We'll call that a bet. Thank you." She chuckled at his frank good humor. "Thank you, Mr. Cardigan, for all your kindness and thoughtfulness; and if you will persist in being nice to me, you might send George Sea Otter and the car at one-thirty. I'll be glad to avail myself of both until I can get a car of my own sent up from San Francisco. Till Wednesday night, then. Good bye."

As Bryce Cardigan hung up, he heaved a slight sigh. It was difficult to get out of the habit of playing; he found himself the possessor of a very great desire to close down the desk. call on Shirley Sumner, and spend the remainder of the day basking in the sunlight of her presence.

Following his discovery of the outrage committed on his father's sanctuary, Bryce wasted considerable valuable time and effort in a futile endeavor to gather some further hint of the identity of the vandals; but despairing at last, he dismissed the matter from his mind, resolving only that on Thursday be would go up into Pennington's woods and interview redoubtable Jules Rondeau. Bryce's natural inclination was to age, Colonel." walt upon M. Rondeau immediately. if not sooner, but the recollection of his dinner engagement at the Pennington home warned him to proceed cautiously; for while harboring no apprehensions as to the outcome of a possible clash with Rondeau, Bryce was not so optimistic as to believe he would escape unscathed from an en counter.

Colonel Pennington's pompous imported British butler showed Bryce into the Pennington living room at six-thirty, announcing him with due ceremony. Shirley rose from the plano where she had been idly fingering the keys and greeted him with every appearance of pleasure-following which,

she turned to present her visitor to Coronel Pennington, who was standing in his favorite position with his back

to the fireplace. "Uncle Seth, this is Mr. Cardigan, who was so very nice to me the day I landed in Red Bluff."

The Colonel bowed. "I have to thank you, sir, for your courtesy to my niece." He had assumed an air of reserve, of distinct aloofness, despite his studied politeness.

"Your niece, Colonel, is one of those fortunate beings the world will always clamor to serve."

"Quite true, Mr. Cardigan, When she was quite a little girl I came under her spell myself." "So dld I, Colonel, Miss Sumner

has doubtless told you of our first meeting some twelve years ago." "Quite so, May I offer you a

cocktail, Mr. Cardigan?" "Thank you, certainly. Dad and I have been pinning one on about this time every night since my return."

"Shirley belongs to the Band of Hope," the Colonel explained, "She's ready at any time to break a lance with the Demon Rum. So we will have to drink her share, Mr. Cardigan. Pray be seated."

Bryce seated himself, "Well, we lumbermen are a low lot and naturally fond of dissipation," he agreed. fear Miss Sumner's prohibition tendencles will be still further strengthened after she has seen the mad-train."

"What is that?" Shirley queried. "The mad-train runs over your uncle's logging railroad into Township nine, where his timber and ours is located. It is the only train operated "Oh, but you mustn't look at things on Sunday, and it leaves Sequola at from that angle after you cross the five p. m. to carry the Pennington and Rocky mountains on your way west. Cardigan crews back to the woods after their Saturday-night celebration in town. As a usual thing, all hands with the exception of the brakeman, engineers, and fireman, are singing, weeping or fighting drunk."

"Do they fight, Mr. Cardigan?" "Frequently, I might say usually. It's quite an inspiring sight to see a couple of lumberjacks going to it on a flat-car traveling thirty miles an

hour." "How borrible!"

"Yes, inneed. The right of way is fined with empty whisky bottles." Colonel Pennington spoke up. "We don't have any fighting on the madtrain any more," he said blandly.

"Indeed! How do you prevent it?" Bryce asked. "My woods-boss, Jules Rondenu. makes them keep the peace," Penning-

ton replied with a small smile. "If

there's any fighting to be done, he does

"You mean among his own crew, of course," Bryce suggested.

"No, he's in charge of the mad-train, and whether a fight ctarts among your men or ours, he takes a hand. He's had them all behaving mildly for quite



"He Can Whip Any Man In Country."

a while, because he can whip any mat in the country, and everybody realized it. I don't know what I'd do without Rondeau. He certainly makes those bohunks of mine step lively."

"Oh-h-h! Do you employ bohunks Colonel?" "Certainly. They cost less; they

are far less independent than most men and more readily handled. And you don't have to pamper them-particularly in the matter of food. Why, Mr. Cardigan, with all due respect to your father, the way he feeds his men is simply ridiculous! Cake and ple and doughnuts at the same meal!"

"Well, Dad started in to feed his men the same food he fed himself. and I suppose the habits one forms in youth are not readily changed in old

"But that makes it hard for other manufacturers," the Colonel protested. "I feed my men good plain food and plenty of it-quite better food than they were used to before they came to this country; but I cannot seem to satisfy them. Your respected parent is the basis for comparison in this country, Cardigan, and I find it devilish inconvenient." He laughed indulgently and passed his cigarette-case to Bryce.

"Uncle Seth always grows restless when some other man is the leader.' Shirley volunteered with a mischie vous glance at Pennington. "Don't you, Nunky-dunk?"

"I'm afraid I do, my dear," the Colonel admitted with his best air of hearty expansiveness. "I'm afraid I do. However, Mr. Cardigan, now that you have-at least, I have been so informed-taken over your father's bustness, I am hoping we will be enabled to get together on many little details and work them out on a common basis to our mutual advantage. We lumbermen should stand together and not make it hard for each other. However," he concluded, "let's not talk shop. I imagine we have enough of that during the day. Besides, here are the cocktails."

With the disposal of the cocktails, the conversation drifted into a discussion of Shirley's adventures with a salmon in Big lagoon. The Colonel discoursed learnedly on the superior sport of muskellunge-fishing, which prompted Bryce to enter into a description of going after swordfish among the islands of the Santa Barbara channel. "Once I was fishing at San-

The butler appeared in the doorway and bowed to Shirley, announcing that dinner was served. The girl rose and gave her arm to Bryce; with her other arm linked through her uncle's she turned toward the dining room.

Just inside the entrance Bryce paused. The soft glow of the candles in the old-fashloned sliver candle sticks upon the table was reflected in the polished walls of the room-walls formed of panels of the most ex quisitely patterned redwood burl Bryce Cardigan had ever seen. Also the

panels were unusually large. Shirley Sumner's alert glance fol lowed Bryce's as it swept around the room. "This dining room is Unch Seth's particular delight, Mr. Cardi gan," she explained.

"It is very beautiful, Miss Sumner And your uncle has worked wonder in the matter of having it polished Those panels are positively the larges and most beautiful specimens of red wood burl ever turned out in thi country. The grain is not merely wavy; it is not merely curly; it actually so contrary that you have here, Colonel Pennington, a room alsolutely unique, in that it is forme of bird's-eye burl. Mark the deep shadows in it. And how it does reflec those candles!

"It is heautiful," the Conel de

clared, "And I must contess to 1 pardonable pride in it, although the task of keeping these walls from be ing marred by the furniture knocking against them requires the utmos care."

Bryce turned and his brown eye blazed into the Colonel's. "Where die you succeed in finding such a marvel ons tree?" he queried pointedly. know of but one tree in Humbold county that could have produced sucl benutiful barl."

For about a second Colonel Penning ton met Bryce's glance unwaveringly then he read something in his guest's eyes, and his glance shifted, while over his benign countenance a flust spread quickly. Bryce noted it, and his quickly roused suspicions were as quickly kindled into certainty. "Where did you find that tree?" he repeated innocently.

"Rondeau, my woods-boss, knew ! was on the lookout for something special-something nobody else could get; so he kept his eyes open."

"Indeed!" There was just a trace of irony in Bryce's tones as he drew Shirley's chair and held it for her "You are fortunate to have such a woods-boss in your employ. Such loyal fellows are usually too good to be true, and quite frequently they put their blankets on their backs and get out of the country when you least expect it. I dare say it would be a shock to you if Rondeau did that."

There was no mistaking the velled threat behind that apparently innocent observation, and the Colonel, being a man of more than ordinary astute ness, realized that at last he must place his cards on the table. "Yes," he said, "I would be rather disappointed. However, I pay Rondeau rather more than it is customary to pay woods-bosses; so I imagine he'll stayunless, of course, somebody takes a notion to run him out of the country. And when that happens, I want to be on hand to view the spectacle."

Bryce sprinkled a modicum of salt in his soup. "I'm going up into Township nine to-morrow afternoon," he remarked casually. "I think I shall go over to your camp and pay the incomparable Jules a brief visit."

Again the Colonel assimilated the hint, but preferred to dissemble. "Oh, you can't steal him from me, Cardigan," he laughed. "I warn you in advance-so spare yourself the effort."

"I'll try anything once," Bryce re torted with equal good nature. "However, I don't want to steal him from you. I want to ascertain from him where he procured this burl."

"He wouldn't tell you."

"He might. I'm a persuasive little cuss when I choose to exert myself." "Rondenu is not communicative. He

requires lots of persuading." "What delicious soup!" Bryce murmured blandly. "Miss Sumner, may !

have a cracker?" The dinner passed pleasantly; the challenge and defiance between guest and host had been so skillfully and gracefully exchanged that Shirley hadn't the slightest suspicion that these two well-groomed men had, under her very nose, as it were, agreed to be enemies and then, for the time being turned their attention to other and more trifling matters. A sprightly three-cornered conversation continued for an hour. Then the Colonel, secretly enraged at the calm, mocking, contemplative glances which Bryce ever and anon bestowed upon him, and unable longer to convince himself that he was too apprehensive-that this cool young man knew nothing and would do nothing even if he knew something-rose, pleaded the necessity for looking over some papers, and bade Bryce good-night. Foolishly he proffered Bryce a limp hand; and a demon of deviltry taking possession of the latter, he squeezed it with a simple,

hearty earnestness, the while he said: "Colonel Pennington, I hope I do not have to assure you that my visit here this evening has not only been delightful but-er-instructive. Goodnight, sir, and pleasant dreams,"

With difficulty the Colonel suppressed a groan. However, he was not the sort of man who suffers in silence; for a minute later the butler, leaning over the banisters as his master climbed the stairs to his library, heard the latter curse with an eloquence that was singularly appealing.

CHAPTER VII.

Colonel Seth Pennington looked up sourly as a clerk entered his private office, "Well?" he demanded brusquely. When addressing his employees, the Colonel seldom bothered to assume his pontifical manner,

"Mr. Bryce Cardigan is waiting to see you, sir." "Very well. Show him in." Bryce entered, "Good morning,

Colonel," he said pleasantly, and bra zenly thrust out his hand. "Not for me, my boy," the Colonel assured him. "I had enough of tha last night. We'll just consider the hand-shaking all attended to, if you please. Have a chair; sit down and

tell me what I can do to make you

happy." "I'm delighted to find you in sucl a generous frame of mind, Colonel You can make me genuinely happy by renewing, for ten years on the same terms as the original contract, your arrangement to freight the logs of the Cardigan Redwood Lumber company

from the woods to tidewater." Colonel Pennington cleared his throat with a propitiatory "Ahem-m m!" Then he removed his gold spec tacles and carefully wiped them with a silk handkerchief, as carefully re placed them upon his aristocratic nose and then gazed curiously at Bryce.

"My dear young friend! My very game like a thoroughbred." deer young friend! I must protest at

being asked to discuss this matter Your father and I have been over it it detail; we falled to agree, and that settles it."

"I did not expect you to agree to my request. I am not quite that optimistic," Bryce replied evenly. "J thought that possibly, if I reopened negotiations you might have a reasonable counter-proposition to suggest."

"I haven't thought of any."

"I suppose if I agreed to sell you that quarter-section of timber in the little valley over yonder" (he pointed to the east) "and the natural outlet for your Squaw creek timber, you'c quickly think of one," Bryce suggested pointedly.

"No. I am not in the market for that Valley of the Glants, as your idealistic father prefers to call it. The possession of that big timber is an advantage I expect to enjoy before I acquire many more gray hairs. But I

do not expect to pay for it." "Do you expect me to offer it to you as a bonus for renewing our hauling contract?"

The Colonel snapped his fingers. By George," he declared, "that's a bright idea, and a few months ago I would have been inclined to consider it very seriously. But now---"You figure you've got us winging.

eh?" Bryce was smiling pleasantly. "I am making no admissions," Pennington responded enigmatically, "-nor any hauling contracts for my neighbor's logs," he added.

"I suppose I'll have to abandon logging in Township nine and go back to the San Hedrin," Bryce sighed resignedly.

"If you do, you'll go broke, You can't afford it. You're on the verge of insolvency this minute."

"I suppose, since you decline to haul our logs, after the expiration of our present contract, and in view of the fact that we are not financially able to build our own logging railroad, that the wisest course my father and I could pursue would be to sell our timber in Township nine to you. It adjoins your holdings in the same township,"

"I had a notion the situation would begin to dawn upon you." The Colonel was smiling now; his handsome face was gradually assuming the expression pontifical. "Til give you a dollar a thousand feet stumpage for It."

"I'm afraid I can't accept that offer. We paid a dollar and a half for it. you know, and if we sold it to you at a dollar, the sale would not bring us sufficient money to take up our bonded indebtedness; we'd only have the San Hedrin timber and the Valley of the Giants left, and since we cannot log either of these at present, naturally we'd be out of business,"

"That's the way I figured it, my "Well-we're not going out of bust

"Pardon me for disagreeing with you

'Not much! We can't afford it." "My dear boy, my very dear young friend, listen to me, Your paternal ancestor is the only human being who has ever succeeded in making a perfect monkey of me. When I wanted to purchase from him a right of way through his absurd Valley of the Giants, in order that I might log my Squaw creek timber, he refused me. And to add insult to injury, he spouted a lot of rot about his big trees, how much they meant to him. and the utter artistic horror of running a logging-train through the grove -particularly since he planned to bequeath it to Sequola as a public park. "I will not renew your logging contract. That is final, young man. No man can ride me with spurs and get

"Oh, I knew that yesterday." "Then why have you called on me today, taking up my time on a dead

away with it."

"I wanted to give you one final chance to repent. I know your plan. You have it in your power to smash



"I Will Not Renew Your Logging Contract."

the Cardigan Redwood Lumber company, acquire it at fifty per cent of its value and merge its assets with your Laguna Grande Lumber company. You are an ambitious man. You want to be the greatest redwood manufacturer in California, and in order to achieve your ambitions, you are willing to ruin a competitor: you decline to play the

"I play the game of business accord

ing to the rules of the game; I do nothing illegal, sir."

"And nothing generous or chivalrous. Colonel, you know your plea of a shortage of rolling-stock is that the contract for hauling our logs has been very profitable and will be more profitable in the future if you will accept a fifty-cent-per-thousand increase on the freight rate and renew the con-

truct for ten years." "Nothing doing, young man. Remember, you are not in a position

"Then I suppose we'll have to go down fighting?" "I do not anticipate much of

fight," "And I'll begin by running your

ask favors."

woods-boss out of the country."

"You know why, of course-those burl panels in your dining room. Rondean felled a tree in our Valley of the Giants to get that burl for you, Colonel Pennington."

Pennington flushed, "I defy you to prove that," he almost shouted.

"Very well. I'll make Rondeau confess; perhaps he'll even tell me who sent him after the burl. Upon my word, I think you inspired that dastardly raid. At any rate, I know Rondeau is guilty, and you, as his employer and the beneficiary of his

crime, must accept the odium." The Colonel's face went white. "I do not admit anything except that you appear to have lost your head, young man. However, for the sake of argument: granting that Rondeau felled that tree, he did it under the apprehension that your Valley of the Giants is a part of my Squaw creek timber

adjoining." "I do not believe that. There was malice in the act-brutality, even; for my mother's grave identified the land as ours, and Rondeau felled the tree

on her tombstone." "If that is so, and Rondeau felled that tree-I do not believe he did-I am sincerely sorry, Cardigan. Name your price and I will pay you for the

"You can't pay for that tree," Bryce burst forth. "No pitiful human being can pay in dollars and cents for the wanton destruction of God's handiwork. You wanted that burl, and when my father was blind and could no longer make his Sunday pilgrimage up to that grove, your woods-boss went up and stole that which you

knew you could not buy." "That will be about all from you, roung man. Get out of my office. And, by the way, forget that you have met my nlece."

"It's your office so I'll get out. As for your second command"-he snapped his fingers in Pennington's face-"fooey!"

When Bryce had gone, the Colone hurriedly called his logging-camp on the telephone and asked for Jules Rondeau, only to be informed by the timekeeper who answered the telephone, that Rondeau was up in the green timber with the choppers and could not be gotten to the telephone

in less than two hours. "Do not send for him, then," Pen nington commanded. "I'm coming up on the eleven-fifteen train and will talk to him when he comes in for his

funch." At eleven o'clock, and just as the Colonel was leaving to board the eleven-fifteen logging-train bound empty for the woods, Shirley Sumner made her appearance in his office,

(Continued next week.)



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